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AN INDEPENDENT COMPUTER USERS' GROUP

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I hope everyone has been enjoying the beautiful summer we have been having. I also hope to see you all at our next meeting, which will not be at the College Of DuPage, but at the Carol Stream Public Library. Due to the unavailability of the College during the summer months, we will have both the August and September meetings at the Carol Stream Public Library. The meetings will start at 11:00am, as usual.

How many of you are fans of science fiction literature? One of my favorite authors has always been Robert Heinlein. I have long admired the man for both his writings and for his special interest in a cause that I also embrace. If you should ever have occasion to meet him or to write to him for his autograph, he will gladly give it to you with one condition attached. You must show that you have recently donated a pint of blood to the Red Cross, a local hospital, or an agency that supplies blood to hospitals.

Mr. Heinlein is keenly aware of the importance of the life-saving qualities of donated blood. It is such a simple act that takes less than one hour of your time out of a minimum of eight weeks. And it can save lives. Your donation might go to save the life of a baby born with complications. Or a child (maybe your own) that fell from a tree. Our neighbors suffering from diseases of the blood can look forward to long and productive lives because you and I have chosen to donate a small sliver of our time to helping them. Someday you may require an operation whose success will depend on the availability of donated blood that matches your blood type.

What are the requirements to donate life? To be a blood donor, you must be at least 18 years old, in good general health, and weigh at least 100 pounds. Those are the basics.

The need for blood donors is ever present. But it is felt most keenly during the summer and holiday seasons. These are busy times in people's lives when their interests may keep them from taking the time to donate. But the demand remains the same as at other times...in fact, it often increases. So pick up the phone and set up an appointment to donate a pint of blood. Be a life saver.

To find out where you can donate, call your local hospital or The Life Source Of Northern Illinois (formally The Blood Center Of Northern Illinois) at 298-9660. Life Source can tell you where a donor site is that is conveniently located for you and set up your appointment. Thank you.

Jeff Williams

MINDSCAPE TO PUBLISH ATARI'S STAND-ALONE ARCADE GAMES FOR HOME

Reprinted from Online Today, a service of CompuServe.

(June 13)

Mindscape Inc. has signed an exclusive agreement with Atari Games Corp. to publish home computer versions of the Milpitas, Calif., company's stand-alone video games that now usually are found in coin arcades.

According to a statement from the Northbrook, Ill., software publisher, first in the line-up of new titles will be Atari's Paperboy and Gauntlet games. Then, over the next few years, Mindscape expects to publish Road Runner, Road Blasters, Gauntlet II and others in home computer formats.

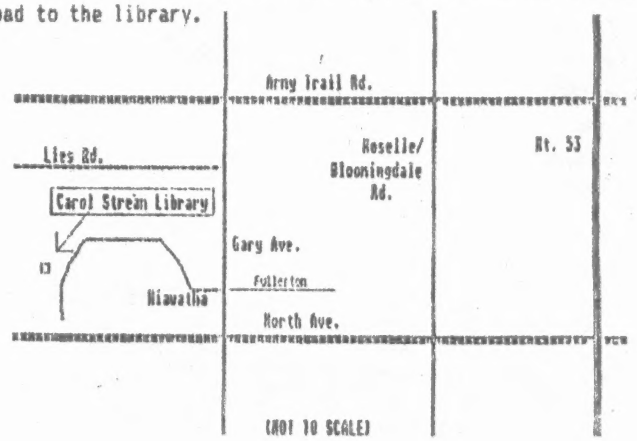
"There are tremendous growth opportunities in the retail versions of coin-op games," says Mindscape President/CEO Roger Buoy. "We look forward to working with Atari because, with their consistently high-quality products and keen perception of the market, they are far and away the best company with which to be associated."

--Charles Bowen

Directions to the Carol Stream Library

From Army Trail Road, go South on Gary Road (the road Stratford Square Mall is on) to Hiawatha Rd. Turn right and follow the curving road to the library.

From North Avenue, go North on Gary Road to Hiawatha Rd. (the first traffic light). Turn left and follow the curving road to the library.



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New ST Titles

"Sub-Battle" from Epyx, "Goldrunner" from Michtron. "Scenery disk #7" for "Flight Simulator II", "ST-Wars", "Fleet Street Publisher", "Stereo CAD 3-D 2.0" with the Stereo-Tek 3-D glasses, "Midway Battles", "Stuff" from Michtron, "X-Rated Graphics" for Printmaster+, "Alice Personal Pascal", "Mad-Libs", "M-Cache" and "Logistix".

New 8 bit Software

"AwardWare", "Technicolor Dream" a 256 color graphic art program, "Pirates of the Barbary Coast", "Midway Battles", "Freaky Factory", "Laser Hawk", "Guderian", "Rocket Repair Man", "Guitar Wizard", "Phantasie", "Autodeul", "Hollywood Hijinx", "221-B Baker St.", "News Station" and "Money Spin"

All software is discounted, user group members with valid I.D. receive a 20% discount off the retail price of software.

WORLD OF ATARI FAIRE

By Nat Friedland, ANTIC Editor

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6/21/87

With all the other Atari Fairs that took place during the past 12 months and the huge Consumer Electronics Show just three weeks ago, it was surprising to find so much new to see last weekend during the hastily-organized World of Atari Faire at the year-old Santa Clara Convention Center

But several unfamiliar companies with impressive ST software made their Atari Fair debuts last weekend. And a near-production version of the Atari SLM804 laser printer had its first public showing. This report concentrates on products that have not been reported on previously.

The Atari laser printer is smaller and lighter than most current models, but seems just about as fast and sharp. It was operating in Diablo 630 emulation with a 4Mb Mega ST running a pre-release version of the Microsoft Write word processor with a WYSIWYG display. The laser controller board is in a modem-sized box cabled between the ST's high-speed Direct Memory Access (DMA) port and the printer. This controller box also has a second DMA port for connecting a hard disk.

This 300 dots-per-inch printer supports Atari's GDOS (which automatically uses the highest resolution available to a printing device). We picked up a selection of the sharp graphics and multi-font printouts that the Atari SLM804 kept churning out throughout the day. Late summer or September is the current estimated market arrival for the Atari Desktop Publishing System.

At a neighboring booth, Word Perfect was showing a near-beta version of the forthcoming ST edition of its bestselling word processor. The GEM-based software, due in September, looked extremely fast and powerful. It will list at $395 but is often discounted by more than 50% in the IBM version. The WP rep said that the company is working closely with Publishing Partner's developers to assure immediate desktop publishing compatibility for the word processor.

Programmers will love Omniware's new Edit/Booster, an ST text editor that also generates GEM code by mouse. Select "Draw A Circle" from a drop-down menu and the GEM code appears in your program. The version currently on sale just works with C, but updates for GFA BASIC, Personal Pascal and Modula-2 are promised soon. Omniware, based in Bellevue, Washington also showed a desk accessory controller for the widely used Hewlett-Packard Laserjet printer and an H-P terminal emulator.

Iliad Software of Orem, Utah, another new entry, showed a powerful, user-friendly CAD/drawing program, Athena II, selling for $100. Athena requires a 1Mb ST, but functions in either color or monochrome. Coming soon is a circuit-testing simulation program called Circuit Maker. The company was also showing a multiuser, multitasking operating system, PDOS, which is similar to the system used on 68000-based VME workstations.

A wide-ranging product line of specialized business applications for the ST was shown by Hi-Tech Advisors of Winter Haven, Florida. Their $199 titles included Church Manager, Service Station Manager, Video Store Manager, Inventory Pro and Sales Pro Plus. Mail Pro handles custom mailing lists and form letters for just $69. SBT of Sausalito, California kicked off a line of dBASE III business accounting modules based on the ST's dBMAN clone.

Beckemeyer Development Tools of Oakland, California showed their latest addition, a touch-screen restaurant menu system. The demonstration model for a Chinese restaurant was almost frighteningly complete and efficient.

Two image scanners were shown at the fair. Navarone, of Sonora, California had a $1,239 ST system including the Canon IX-12 scanner. The simpler $100 IMG Scan from Seymor-Radix of Irving, TX used a small box that tapes to the print head of any dot matrix printer that supports graphics.

Old-timer Lou Schwing of Astra Systems was gleefully demonstrating the ruggedness of his HD+ unit which combines an 20Mb hard disk and a double-sided ST 3.5" disk. The HD+ was notably cool and even kept operating as he waved it in the air and laid it on its side. DeskCart, a $100 cartridge from Quantum Micro of Liverpool, New York is a real-time clock/calendar with a full set of Sidekick-type desk accessories including a filer, calculator, address book, notebook, macros, RAMdisk driver and other utilities. The cartridge format is claimed to save memory and operate faster.

The World of Atari was busy and profitable for most exhibitors throughout its Friday-Saturday run. The thriving Antic booth was showing upcoming ST graphics software from The Catalog -- Cyber Paint, a paint program that creates images for animation with Cybermate, and Spectrum 512, a smooth-lined, ultra-clear paint program that can display all the ST's 512 colors simultaneously.

Eighty Columns on the Atari

by Dr. Warren Lieuallen

Reprinted from Fuji Facts the newsletter of the Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus

For quite some time now, the possibility of having an eighty column screen (as opposed to the forty column screen that we are all so familiar with) on the eight-bit Atari computers has been discussed, announced, and even realized by a few. But for the most part, significant expense and hardware modification has been required to achieve this new look.

Many other computer systems have an eighty column screen: IBM and all the clones, the Amiga, modified Apples, and even the Commodore 128! It is widely accepted by many that serious word processing, and business applications in general are not practical, or even possible without eighty columns.

We all know better of course, having had the intelligence and foresight to purchase and use Atari computers systems. As I write this article I am word processing on a forty column screen, and doing it quite seriously, I might add! I have used spreadsheets and business graphics packages, and have even run The Bookkeeper a time or two. However, the fact remains that there are times when having eighty columns on the screen would be desirable (otherwise, all our word processors wouldn't have print preview, would they?). A good example is that of trying to align columns of figures or text on the printed page. Even with careful use of the print preview features, it often turns out that the page must be printed several times before it turns out correct. How much easier this job would be if we could just see the entire page on the screen -- all eighty columns.

Well, now you can. There are now available several methods by which an eighty column screen can be simulated on the Atari computer system. They all work in a similar manner, and basically involve "drawing" the characters on a Graphics 8 screen. This is because the resolution of a Graphics 8 screen is 320 by 192 pixels (without the text window at the bottom, so it's really Graphics 24). If each character were only four pixels wide (instead of the usual eight), eighty characters would just fit across the screen. And that's exactly what happens. The characters are redefined as graphic bit patterns four pixels wide, and the operating system is redirected to use complicated drawing routines for all screen output -- that's the tricky part!

All of the commercially available eighty column packages require some hardware modification of some type. There is

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one product called the Ace 80 cartridge, or the Ace 80 XL for XL computers. This device is a cartridge, just like the others we are used to, and is inserted into the appropriate cartridge port before booting the system. A review of this new product appeared in a recent issue of ANALOG, so won't be repeated here (I really don't know anything other than what I read!).

A second device is the Omniview 80 chip, which as the name suggests, is an eighteen-pin IC chip. This chip replaces the old operating system chip inside the computer. Installation depends upon which computer you have (800 XL, 1200 XL or 130 XE), and whether or not the OS chip is socketed or soldered. In any event, once this chip is in place, the standard default screen can be changed to an eighty column format by merely pressing Control-A, and then pressing System Reset. The eighty column text is surprisingly readable, even on a color TV set (the worse of all possible display mechanisms for 80 column text).

However, the eighty column feature is only available from BASIC, or assembly language programs which do not reset or interfere with the "redirection" of the operating system to the Omniview routines. What this really means in plain English is you can only use the Omniview 80 from BASIC, from the SpeedScript 80 word processor included with the chip, or from programs you write yourself. I have tried all of the word processors I own (nine, at last count!), and none of them will use the eighty column screen. The Omniview 80 documentation includes modifications which can be made to several versions of Letter Perfect and Data Perfect, but I have not done these yet. OmniView 80 also includes OmniWriter, a specially modified version of the public domain word processor SpeedScript, which does function in 80 columns.

The Omniview 80 also includes new floating point math routines which are considerable faster than the ones in the Atari OS. Running a benchmark test, I found the Omniview routines to be approximately 75% faster than the Atari routines. However, in my day to day usage of the computer, I did not notice any significant differences in program execution time. Applications which make heavy use of mathematical functions should benefit from Omniview's speed.

Finally, the Omniview replaces the operating system in the XL machines with one which much more closely approximates the old OS of the 800 machines. This means that the translator disk is no longer needed. If you have any programs which needed "OS translation" before, you will appreciate this feature.

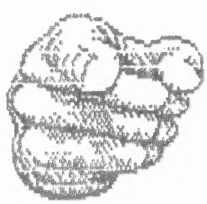
The other possibilities are all software drivers. One of the first was Compute!'s Video 80 program, written by Charles Brannon. This program creates a new input/output device for the Atari, the "V:" device. This device includes the eighty column screen handler, as well as supporting a window feature, with user definable margins all the way around. A demonstration of these two features combined with each other is impressive. However, the limitations of Video 80 are even more restrictive than those of Omniview 80. Programs using Video 80 are limited to those you write yourself, although both BASIC and assembly language should remain valid possibilities. Secondly, the logical line length is shortened to eighty characters, rather than 120 as in Atari BASIC. Lastly, this program requires the Translator disk on XL machines.

These limitations notwithstanding, it is hard to beat the price/performance ratio of Video 80, as this program is in the public domain and therefore free. If nothing else, it serves as an excellent introduction to the world of eighty columns, and will allow you to decide whether to invest further in this field, or to be glad that your Atari displays forty legible characters per line. I am currently working on a BASIC word processor to work with Video 80, but due to both the shortcomings of BASIC and myself, this program will be of limited usefulness.

I recently came across programs called Text 80, and Script 80, but have not been especially successful in getting them to function. Finally, there is a small (13 sector) utility called HIGHREZ.COM, which also produces an 80 column screen. I have not used this extensively, but I imagine its is quite similar to Video 80.

As we have been told for more than a year now, Atari is developing an eighty column device, the XEP 80. Several reviews of this product have appeared elsewhere, and I have little to add. Watch for an in-depth review once this device is actually available to we users.

Batteries Included had a BI-80 board under development for the Atari systems, but cancelled it at the end of 1985. Another product called the Bit-3 board was supposed to include an eighty column driver for the 800 computers. The last time I saw an ad for this product, it cost $249.00; I don't know if it is still available or not.



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ICD Conference on Delphi

The following is an edited transcript of a recent conference on Delphi with Tom Harker, the president of ICD, Inc.

<Mat> Does Atari's XEP80 have color capability like your 80 column card will?
ICD-Tom> No. Theirs (current design) is only monochrome composite and 19.2k baud.

MATTYKID> So yours is the 'better' board?
ICD-Tom> Better is a relative term.

<Mat> Right. Yours does have 16 color capability, right?
ICD-Tom> Right, Mat

<Mat> Would be nice if it could use MIO ram to do graphics, eh?
ICD-Tom> But, who would write the software? If we thought there was someone who would support it, we would have done ST quality bit mapped graphics.

MATTYKID> Is it possible to get an MIO w/o RAM?
ICD-Tom> No, the MIO comes 256K or 1 ME6. 256K is as close to 0 RAM as it comes.

MATTYKID> I already have a P:R: connection and 256K, the only thing I would need a MIO for is the 80 columns.

<Mat> MIO drives both P: and R: - and the RAM in the MIO will work nicely as printer buffer. You could sell the P:R: Connection. You wouldn't need it anymore.
ICD-Tom> Sell your P:R: Connection and you will have the money for the RAM.

<Mat> Tom, I think a LOT of people DON'T realize that MIO can drive P: and R:. You need a big ad for the MIO, like you have run for the P:R: Connection.
ICD-Tom> We probably will when the backorders get filled.

<Mat> How many backorders you got?
ICD-Tom> A few hundred. And we ship about 10 a day. We don't really make that much on MIOS (due to volume and production methods) so it is really nicer to sell P:R: Connections.

<Mat> Have you sold that first 1000 yet?
ICD-Tom> No, but it will come soon.

<Mat> What do you think the final price on the 80 columns will be?
ICD-Tom> To answer your question on affordability we do not really intend to go head to head with Atari on anything. They have a definite price advantage with their size and Taiwan manufacturing. So instead, we design niche products that fill voids in their markets.

<Mat> Yes - you should put a nice big MADE IN USA on your products. "Fine handcrafted electronics from the Lincoln state" -- hey, it could start a trend.
ICD-Tom> Built like log homes! At least we are learning business. We now have 11 employees soon to be 13 or 14.

<Mat> Glad things are picking up. Will you get into the ST business any time soon?
ICD-Tom> Do you think there would be any interest in "KIT" hard drives for the ST? Like we do for the MIO hard drives? Maybe 2 drives in a box? People could put in their own drive mechanisms.

<Mat> Sure, if you can beat the other guys by a good margin. Well, Astra has the HD with 1ME6 floppys in a unit for backups, 20 floppies for a 20ME6 backup (approx.).
ICD-Tom> And with 2 HDS in one unit, one can be backup.

<Mat> How about a unit with streaming tape backup built in.
ICD-Tom> But why a streaming tape? Another drive mechanism costs less.

ANALOG2> By KIT do you mean a Heathkit type of project?
<Mat> PC clone kit type. You assemble.
ICD-Tom> No, I mean -- get the boards and drives and bolt them in. And plug them in.

ANALOG2> But that's no fun! <hehe>
ICD-Tom> That also solves a problem we all have with the FCC. I suppose we could have a kit or 2 with no components on the boards. As long as we don't have to fix them.

Charlie> I don't know if anyone has asked this one, but does ICD or any company make a DOS that is compatible with a Corvus HD for the 8-bits?
ICD-Tom> No, but you probably can hook the Corvus into an MIO.

<Mat> Does CORVUS support 8-bits any more?
ICD-Tom> The Corvus system was a SASI interface (I think) with a joystick adapter board.

Charlie> We got an old one a few years ago to run the old ANALOG TCS -- I don't think they currently support it.
ICD-Tom> They quit supporting that one 3 years ago (or more)

Charlie> If it is SASI could it be connected to an ST with the appropriate adapter?
ICD-Tom> Aha! If we only had kit drives for the ST you could buy the ST Adaptor from us.

Charlie> Should I cross my fingers?
ICD-Tom> Sure, we are spending some time in that direction.
<Mat> CHEAPer hard drives for the ST, even kit types, would be big sellers I think.

ICD-Tom> Were you at CES Charlie?
Charlie> No, Clay and Lee went though -- I might be going to Chicago.
<Mat> Great Charlie! I should be there!

ICD-Tom> Atari had a lot of interesting things to show. They showed the proposed 8-bit game machine/computer (65XE) with detachable keyboard. It is going to Europe soon, they say. They are also selling a lot of 8-bits to Iron curtain countries since they don't allow 16 bits over there. I don't have a 65XE but I checked the schematic and it has a composite jack on it. Atari also proposed a parallel expansion bus on the 8-bit game machine. Ala the 800XL (50 pin). The chain stores seemed interested in the game machine also, since there is a resurgence in Video games.
<Mat> Sounds good! An 8-bit with detachable keyboard, eh? Nintendo seems to have revived the video game market.

ICD-Tom> They also showed a real neat "laser" gun which plugs into to the joystick port. Any software developed for that should also work with the XL/XE computers!
<Mat> Laser gun like Laser Tag? Or light pen for SHOOTING the TV as the Nintendo game has?

ICD-Tom> Light pen for shooting at the tube like Ninetendo has. I did notice at our local club meeting today there are a lot of "new" Atari users. So Atari must be selling computers to some new folks.

CFJ> So what's new at ICD, anyway?
ICD-Tom> Well we just got a shipment of hard drives in. Seriously, we are trying to get SpartaDOs X out the door.

CFJ> Is that the cartridge version?
ICD-Tom> Yes, but people seem to be missing the real benefits which is the Data Base. The data base is Faaassttt...

<Mat> Gotta write a KILLER FAST BBS to run under it!
ICD-Tom> Could be used for some really great BBS programs as well as dbase type things.

CFJ> There's a database built into the SpartaDos cartridge? That's the first I've heard of it.
ICD-Tom> Yes.. a faster one than you could imagine. Faster than dBase 2 on the IBM PC. Most people are just concerned with the high speed Indus code we are putting in SpartaDOS X but there are a bunch of other really impressive things there. Networking for the MIO will also be supported.

<Mat> Have you finalized how many of the .COM files will become part of the cartridge?
ICD-Tom> We are not putting .COM files in it...

<Mat> Have you done any networking installations yet?
ICD-Tom> We are integrating a lot of the main features. We showed some Networking through a SCSI scheme at last COMDEX but SpartaDOS X will have networking through the MIO serial ports at around 38.4K baud.

CFJ> What memory area does the cart occupy? $A000 - $BFFF?
ICD-Tom> It doesn't really occupy cart RAM. It controls the top cartridge and banks (turns) it on and off as needed. It acts just like regular DOS as far as the user sees it.

CFJ> It must need some space for disk I/O buffers, etc., though?
ICD-Tom> Sure but so do other DOS's like disk SpartaDOS. It puts the buffers down at LOMEM. It is not a small program and resides in a 32K EPROM.

CFJ> Yep, no way around _that_! Got any ST products coming?
ICD-Tom> We were just talking about the possibility of KIT drives for the ST.

ICD-Tom> Do any of you have hard drives on your STs?
CFJ> Yes, I have the Atari 20 meg.
<Mat> CFJ and Analog2 do. I am getting one soon, I think.

ICD-Tom> How do you back it up?
CFJ> Right now I have a PD program that seems to do a decent job copying to floppies.

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ICD-Tom> With the GEM COPY functions? What PD program?
CFJ> It's actually two programs. BACKUP.TTP and RESTORE.TTP.

ICD-Tom> Are those the ones Dan Moore and David Small wrote?
CFJ> NO, I haven't seen that program yet. Dan makes it sound great, though. I'm still looking for a faster backup.

ICD-Tom> Would you buy one if we wrote it or just get a COPY of it?
CFJ> Hey, it's an honest guy!

ICD-Tom> How much $$$?
CFJ> I figure somewhere in the neighborhood of $30 is reasonable, but remember, Dan Moore's is being published in STart.

ICD-Tom> If we do write one, it will be very good and well supported and probably around $39.95 which translates to $30 mail order.

CFJ> I think you should be able to do both file and sector copies.
ICD-Tom> Would you prefer one which allows you to run your backed up files right off the floppies (slower) or one which requires you uncompress the files first?

CFJ> It's not that important to me to run the backups off floppy. I usually have other backups too. You should be able to backup only newly-updated files, as well.

SMORTIMER> Plan on getting the new SH205 when its released. Costs $550 for 20mb.
ICD-Tom> Is that the one they announced at CES?

SMORTIMER> Yea.
ICD-Tom> What have you heard of the SH205 besides low cost?

SMORTIMER> Well, same style as Mega ST. A second DMA port. 20 megabytes.
ICD-Tom> How many SH205s can you hook together?

SMORTIMER> ???? The DMA port is mainly meant for the laser printer. What would come in the kit?
ICD-Tom> KIT Case, power, controller, ST adapter, cables, etc.

SMORTIMER> Then you could just plug in any standard drive?
ICD-Tom> Yes.

SMORTIMER> How much?
ICD-Tom> Case $145 (with 45 watt switcher) - controller $135 - ST adapter around $100 including software.

SMORTIMER> That all adds up to about what the SH 205 will cost.
ICD-Tom> Yep. Except you can hook 2 drives in this kit. And use it with a MacIntosh. And a MIO to 8-bit. And I suppose a PC clone.

HERBY> Why don't you guys make a 1200 baud direct connect modem for the 8 bit? I am getting tired of waiting for ATARIS.
SMORTIMER> Atari already cornered that I think.

HERBY> Where is it?
ICD-Tom> To sell for $100 or less and plug into either the ST or XE with no interface?

HERBY> Has anybody seen or used the ATARI one yet??
SMORTIMER> It's with the 80 column card, 3.5" drive,... I have seen it.

ICD-Tom> We have seen and actually touched one. But were closely watched as we approached it with a philips head.

HERBY> Gee! How's sales on the MIO doing? ICD has really done a bang-up job so far with their stuff. Has anyone seen 1030 EXP version 3 yet?
ICD-Tom> 1030 Express is not done yet according to Keith (and maybe not started).

SMORTIMER> Yup, when I was an 8 bitter, ICD had some nice products.
ICD-Tom> We still have some nice products.

HERBY> I use an 800 with 850 Express Version 3 and an ST with Flash and love em both!

SMORTIMER> Tom any other ventures planned for the ST other than the KIT?
ICD-Tom> Have you seen our Printer Connection?
SMORTIMER> No.

ICD-Tom> What do you people want for the ST from ICD!?
Charles Johnson> A stand-alone RAMdisk similar to MIO would be nice!
SMORTIMER> Well, how about an external memory enhancement for the 520, 1040.
<<Lee>> You know what would sell tons, a replaceable NICE keyboard.

ICD-Tom> Are there any external RAM devices available for it?
Charles Johnson> I second the keyboard vote too.
SMORTIMER> Not a one. I third the keyboard.
Charles Johnson> No external RAM for the ST yet, to my knowledge.
<<Lee>> An infrared mouse.

ICD-Tom> Now comes the difficult part of this survey. How much $$$$ would you pay for it?
<<Lee>> As little as possible.
SMORTIMER> $150 max.

ICD-Tom> Then you get one (LEE) like the ST has already!
<<Lee>> I would say under a $100.
SMORTIMER> The memory enhancement would go over big with soldering klutzs like me.

ICD-Tom> I will check into that. Is it the key caps or the action you don't like?
Charles Johnson> The action! Too mushy feeling, not crisp.
SMORTIMER> Firmer keys. More spacing.

Charles Johnson> I'd buy a 4 meg internal upgrade for my 1040ST _today_, if you had one!
<<Lee>> I think that would be a big seller.
ICD-Tom> With or without RAM?

Charles Johnson> With RAM...I'd prefer not to find the chips myself.
SMORTIMER> Me too. Buy an ICD memory upgrade and detatchable keyboard to get the equivalent of a Mega.

ICD-Tom> Wait a second. Detatchable was not mentioned.
<<Lee>> No not detatchable.

ICD-Tom> We were talking replacement keyboard in my mind.
JIMGAR> Tom, if it is any help, I am considering an ST, but I ~~prefer~~ ICD products to any other.

ICD-Tom> How about a 4 Meg internal RAM upgrade with 0 RAM based on 1 MEG ICS? That way you can upgrade as they become affordable!
Charles Johnson> Sounds good. But I'm running out of Ramdisk space right now.

ICD-Tom> Doesn't anyone use their 8-bits anymore?
Charles Johnson> I do. Albeit, occasionally!

ICD-Tom> But you (Charles) can get 1 MEG ICs for about $35 each right now. Just need 8 for a MEG. My problem (personally) with the ST is that I HATE!! GEM (sorry guys).

Charles Johnson> SO what would be a logical price for a 4 meg upgrade, including RAM?
ICD-Tom> About $300 per MEG

<Mat> 300 per meg? Ouch.
ICD-Tom> Are you willing to spend $900 or $1000 to turn your 520 or 1040 into 4 MEG ?

JIMGAR> Won't this price come down in time as others have?
ICD-Tom> Yes.. But you said you need it now.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

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<Mat> With the YEN vs. US dollar situation, they're getting MORE costly
ICD-Tom> No, not 1 MEG ICs and they will be making them here in the US as things get worse

JIM6AR> I personally cannot see how I could ever use more than 1 Meg at this time. I have not even filled my 256k XL yet.
ICD-Tom> But a 16 bit machine uses RAM at least twice as fast.
JIM6AR> OK

Charles Johnson> Right, Tom! And I too have a love/hate relationship with GEM, heavily leaning towards the hate side.
ICD-Tom> The data path is twice as wide plus programmers don't worry as much about efficiency on the 16 bit.

JIM6AR> Maybe the ST can be made PC compatible--no more icons!!
ICD-Tom> If you want a PC compatible (JIM6AR) you need a PC compatible.

JIM6AR> It is only a matter of time until we see alternate ST operating systems.
<Mat> There are already alternative operating systems for the ST, most notably the MT-SHELL from Beckemeyer.

SHORTIMER> Jim, having Atari put out an alternative OS will be suicide.
ICD-Tom> I don't think you will see another OS for the ST. TOS is here to stay with GEM. That is what the good software will be written for.

JIM6AR> how about the OMNIMON, etc. that have been made for the 8-bit machines?
ICD-Tom> Omimon and Omniview are for "Hackers" though. We are talking mainstream computer users.

Charles Johnson> Hmmm...there's another wish-list product for the ST...a resident monitor.
JIM6AR> The Omniview seems to work very well. I am using it now

ICD-Tom> Omniview is about 4K of code for a 12K OS. We are talking about a 192K OS on the ST aren't we?
SHORTIMER> Correct.

ICD-Tom> I know we don't have time to rewrite it without a big fat contract from Atari!
Charles Johnson> But written in C, for the most part.

ICD-Tom> That's right! Maybe that's where those bugs came from?
Charles Johnson> No maybes there!

ICD-Tom> I think the probleas stem from no support from the authors (Digital Research). Big companies like them just don't care about the ST.
Charles Johnson> Dan Moore says the programmer working on parts of GEM was being fired from his job while writing it!

ICD-Tom> They just wrote it, delivered it, and that is their only involvement. Correct me if I am wrong, but that is what I have heard.

KURTO> Oh, that explains GDOS.
JIM6AR> If it is that bad, then why are so many using it?????
<Mat> It comes IN the computer, most people don't have a choice.

ICD-Tom> Atari also has a reputation for being CHEAP with programmers, so I am sure that had something to do with the contract terms and support. And the GEM user interface is supposed to be difficult and time consuming.
Charles Johnson> It's not really that bad. It's just that when you start programming for GEM, you find a _lot_ of bugs!

JIM6AR> Does that mean I should consider a different machine?
ICD-Tom> That depends on what you want out of a computer.

KURTO> Is ICD planning a resident monitor for the ST?
Charles Johnson> No, that was just a wish from me, Kurt.
ICD-Tom> No, we were just discussing that.

KURTO> Hmm. I currently use the monitor in Devpac, but it seems to crash out at the least provocation. It seems that the obvious product would be an accessory that worked as a monitor. That way, debugging GEM programs would be be easier.

<Mat> What's the current price on the hard drives for the MIO? You are marketing them, right?
ICD-Tom> 10 MEG $499
20 MEG $649
10 + 10 MEG $695
20 + 20 MEG $995

KURTO> Do your drives have a port on the back for other hard drives such as the Atari SH204?
ICD-Tom> We will if we do anything like that for the ST (but we are talking 8-bit here).
<Mat> Anyone have anything else to say, ask?
Charles Johnson> No, thanks Tom! Best of luck to ICD!
<Mat> Thanks for your time Tom.
ICD-Tom> Thanks Mat, later. Thanks Charles and Jim.
<Mat> Thanks everyone. Bye!

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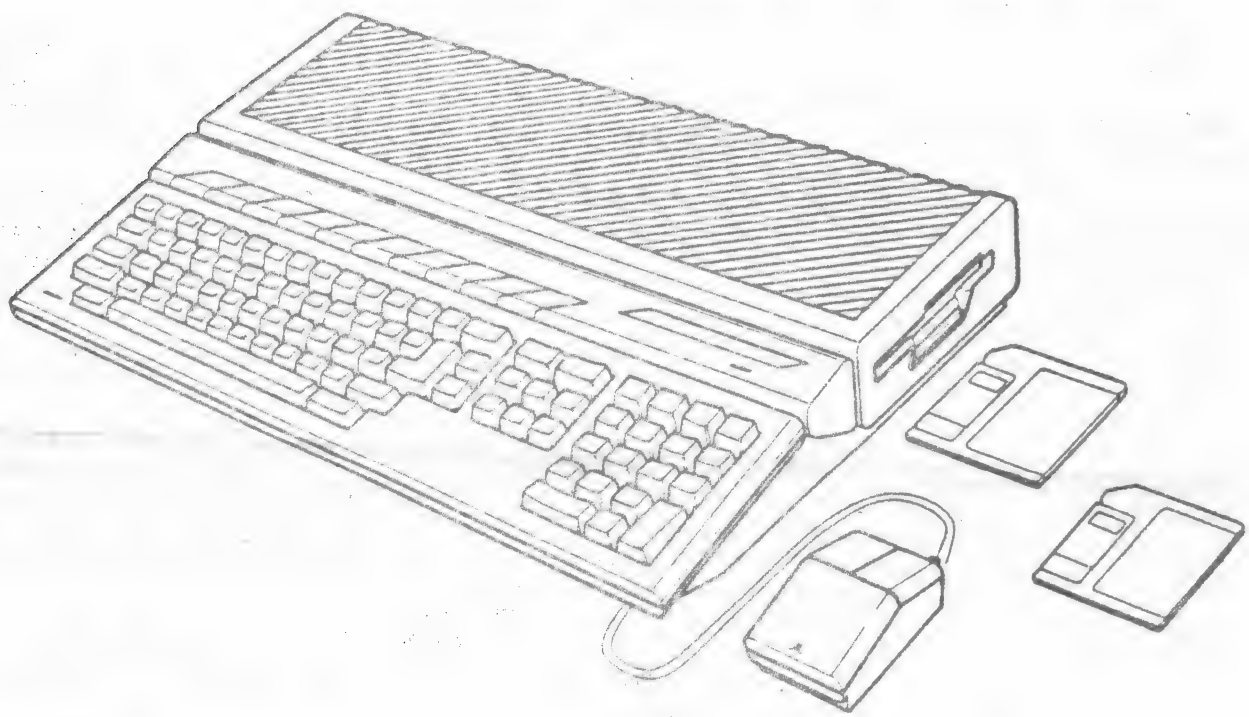

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ST SCAN FROM NAVARONE
"Small But Beautiful"
by Richard Murray

I want one thing understood at the beginning. When I'm involved in a desktop publishing project, whether it be a brochure, an advertisement, a flyer or creating a logo, I absolutely refuse to use scissors, graphic art tools or rubber cement. After investing thousands of dollars in computer equipment over the past few years it would be humiliating to resort to using such "low tech" paraphernalia. Consequently I have spent hours on end creating line art drawings with DEGAS, PUBLISHING PARTNER, or whatever else was handy.

When Navarone Industries announced that ST SCAN was ready for shipment, I called them immediately and said "Gimme!" When I hung up the phone, I thought "Darn, why didn't I tell them to ship it overnight air?" I waited for a solid week for my precious bundle to arrive (actually it was only six days but it seemed like a week).

The outside of the package said CANNON IX-8/12; "Wait a minute. Don't tell me they ship the interface unit separately?" Once opened I was relieved to find the Navarone interface and cable stacked on top of the scanner.

Let me describe the equipment. First of all, the scanner itself is surprisingly compact. It measures 13 5/8 in. wide by 11 5/8 in. deep by 3 1/2 in. high and weights 15.4 lbs. The interface unit which plugs into the ST cartridge port is a small 6 by 3 in. box with an outside port for the interface cable that leads to the scanner itself.

Setting up the unit is very easy. Just plug in the power cord and interface cable and you're ready to go. The ST SCAN Instruction Manual is a rather sparse 20 pages but then operation of the scanner with the un-copyprotected software supplied by Navarone is GEM based and almost self explanatory.

Operation of the scanner is indeed quite simple if you are able to get it to work. Which unfortunately I couldn't. After waiting a solid week (okay six days), ST SCAN would only give me a blank screen no matter what I fed through it. Being a rather mature, patient individual, I immediately called Navarone and in a calm voice said "GIMME A NEW ONE!!"

Navarone should be highly commended for being courteous and extremely helpful in their handling of the problem. After stepping through the system with me, we came to the conclusion that the culprit was most likely the interface unit and not the scanner or my ST cartridge port. They shipped me a new unit and this time they shipped it overnight air!

Since I love to tinker with high tech stuff I decided to try to repair the dead interface unit myself. I removed the four small phillips screws which hold the unit together, and once it was opened, took a close look at a bunch of chips and wires. There were three small wires on the bottom which were soldered in various places. Suddenly I discovered what the problem might be. One of the wires had come loose! I took some masking tape (I never said I was a service tech) and taped the connection back in place. I reassembled the interface unit, plugged everything back in, booted up the software, fed Navarone's advertising brochure through the scanner at 150 dpi and there it was in living black and white; a complete duplication of the brochure on my ST monitor!

Okay, now back to the basics. Although ST SCAN will work with a 520ST, one drive and a mono or color monitor, there are certain limitations that make it much more suitable for a 1040ST one meg system (2 meg would be even better).

If you have a 520ST and you expect to be able to scan an 8 1/4 by 11 1/2 in. page at 300 dpi, load it into PUBLISHING PARTNER or DEGAS and manipulate it to your hearts content, forget it. You are only allowed to scan a small portion of the document at that resolution through use of a GEM window. This is not a fault of Navarone's system but a memory limitation of my computer. The more memory, the greater area you will be able to scan. Also the lower resolution you use, down to 75 dpi, the greater area you can scan. I had a chance to hook up the system to a friend's 1040ST and the scan window was almost three times larger.

For all of us 520ST owners, Navarone has supplied a conversion program on the ST SCAN disk which allows you to break up a scanned image in .IMG format into smaller DEGAS files which can then be edited and reassembled into a large .IMG file that is compatible with PUBLISHING PARTNER.

The Scanner Options Menu allows resolutions at 75, 150, 200 and 300 dpi. Image contrast can be light, normal or dark. The scanning method options of either Line Art or Halftone depend upon what you are scanning. Line art is for drawings, illustrations and logos while halftone is for photographs providing up to 32 shades of gray. Scanned images can be saved in DEGAS, .IMG or POSTSCRIPT format.

It should be noted that Navarone will soon release a program called ST LASERPAINT which will allow large scanned areas to be edited and saved in .IMG files which will retain their full dpi resolution. When a file is saved in DEGAS format it retains only the current screen resolution.

So what's the bottom line? How do the images look once you have hardcopy on your printer? The answer to that depends on what kind of printer you have. Navarone makes no bones about it. They state in their manual that "The real power of scanned images are best demonstrated when printing on laser printers." And they are absolutely right. But what about us poor folk who can't afford to spend $5000 on a POSTSCRIPT compatible laser printer? The answer is, we don't have to. SoftLogik has more than adequately filled the gap with their excellent dot matrix printer drivers available for PUBLISHING PARTNER. These drivers do an excellent job of reproducing line art images scanned with ST SCAN. Resolution on pictures printed out is a little grainy but again this can be overcome with more memory on your ST combined with shrinking the image in PUBLISHING PARTNER or DEGAS.

I have printed images on my NEC P7 (24 pin dot matrix) and so far am very pleased with the results. Even the photographs printed at 300 dpi look good and rival the results of the video digitizers available for the ST. But line art on a dot matrix is where ST SCAN really shines. When you feed good quality sketches, pen drawings or artwork into ST SCAN you'll get almost exact reproduction even at 75 dpi.

Now it's time to get picky. Getting back to the interface unit, one problem I noticed is that the end of the cable which attaches to the interface box was supplied with screws which are not long enough to secure the cable. As a matter of fact they won't even touch the screw holes. This was definitely an engineering oversight as the underneath part of the cable end has to be propped up with something to make sure it doesn't continually put pressure on the interface connection. I slid a blank cassette tape under it which does the job temporarily until I can find some screws that are long enough.

The CANNON XI12 has a flaw which can be irritating at times. Its design includes feeder guides on each side which help to guide the paper as its being fed into the scanner. Cannon apparently assumed that everyone would be placing an 8 1/4 in. wide sheet of paper in their scanner because the guides won't close any further than that. Consequently, if you have an item with smaller width, it has a tendency to be fed in at an angle unless you quickly guide it through by hand until the scanner grabs it and takes over.

Navarone needs to elaborate on their instruction manual particularly in the areas dealing with DEGAS and .IMG files. I tried to break down an .IMG file into separate DEGAS files using their conversion program supplied on the disk to find that I ended up with two files. One with a .PI3 extender and one with a .CTL extender. The .PI3 file works fine in PUBLISHING PARTNER and DEGAS as a high rez file but I ended up confused as to what the conversion program is all about when you can save a .PI3 file directly from the ST SCAN program.

These are very minor criticisms, however, and do not detract at all from Navarone's excellent product not to mention Cannon's. Incidentally, the Cannon XI12 does a good job of reading text as well as images.

I have two warnings for those of you who are considering purchasing the ST SCAN system. The first is that scanning can be very addicting. You know all of those favorite computer magazines you were always reluctant to tear pages out of with the thought that they might be collectors items some day? Well forget it. Nothing is sacred anymore. You will find yourself scanning anything you can get your hands on, from pictures of your wife or girl friend to photos of the cat and dog. You definitely won't be cutting and pasting anymore, but you'll be tearing a lot of things up.

The second warning is that, if like me, you own a 520ST you'll have an almost insatiable craving for more ram and will want to upgrade the 520 as far as it will go. You'll want at least two meg of course because that will allow you to get almost full resolution at 300 dpi per scanned page. Besides, I hear that Atari's new laser printer will require about 2 meg to take full advantage of its features. And of course you'll need a hard drive to save all of those huge 300 dpi files.

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Starglider Strategies

By Blake Arnold

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After having several people ask me how I achieved my high score at Starglider (which I shall not divulge..lets just say it's "very high"), I've decided to put my hints in print. Hopefully no one will actually beat MY high score, but have fun trying anyway!

The Proper Attitude

To start with, we'll probably need to change your attitude toward events in the game; you'll need the "fighter pilot" attitude. When you barely escape death or damage, it is not LUCK. The concept of luck is for those without SKILL. Instead of viewing your feat as "luck," look at it as "skill." An attitude like this will teach you that no matter what, YOU are in control. Knowing that you have control and keeping a cool head at ALL times, no matter how difficult they seem, will allow you to think through a tough situation. Starglider may SEEM like a mindless "shoot 'em up" sometimes, but believe me, a solid strategy and the ability to THINK THROUGH a tough situation will allow you to really clean up.

Strategies

These strategies for use in the game have been fine tuned after several (hundred) games of Starglider. Here's what you've been waiting for:

Juno Cannons

Juno Cannons can be an annoyance to even the best Starglider player, however, they have one basic weakness: they can't shoot low if you're close to them. The easiest way to obliterate a Juno Cannon is to land close to it's base (bottom) and blast away at the offending object.

Refueling

When refueling on levels higher than Level 2, keep one thing in mind: a stationary target is easier to hit. If you sit still while refueling (I do when I can get away with it), YOU will be the stationary target. Keep moving! A little practice will allow you to slide through a power grid at a speed that won't allow them to get a good lock on your ship, but will still allow you to refuel. On high levels don't try to refuel all at once, it may not be possible due to enemy fire. Another little "trick" that I use on higher levels is to find a power grid and clear out all the enemy installation around it, then when I need fuel I go back to that one grid. Also, when refueling WATCH YOUR RADAR; if you see enemy fire headed in your direction, get out of there! On some of the higher levels you may find that the energy towers have been turned off; to turn the grid back on just shoot the towers (too many shots will turn it back off).

One of the best common-sense hints I can give you is that on higher levels refuel often. Sometimes it may be necessary to refuel when you still have half your energy left. It can be a hassle, but it's better than being destroyed.

Docking

The only rule that I follow is that if my shields go below half, I dock the first chance I get.

Killing Krudd

Ah, the object of the game! Most of the time it's just a waiting game to kill him, but there are some strategies to invoke for a better shot at him. On levels greater than level 1, do not fly directly behind Krudd, as you'll be eating missiles when he fires at you. Fly either a little above or below and to one side of him. This will also keep him from firing constantly and allow you to sneak a missile into him (lasers are useless against him), and don't fire at him until it looks like you're almost right on him (this gives you a better chance of hitting him).

Scoring

To achieve a HIGH score, it's necessary to keep from mindlessly blasting at everything that moves (to an extent). Don't bother with the red blocks that fire lasers. Tanks can also be ignored for the most part (there will be situations that warrant their destruction). Walkers, Stompers, and Stargliders make nice targets and score well, so go after them. Krudd is the one you're after, though. Don't kill Krudd whenever he flys by, though. Since the game advances you a level for every 10,000 points scored, try to build up points close to 10,000 on each level, and THEN go after Krudd. That will result in a nice score relatively quickly.

Well, those are some of my strategies. That should be enough to get you to the point that you can fine-tune your own strategies. Have fun with it. Who knows, maybe I'll have some competition now!

N O T I C E S

SCAT general meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month at 11:00am. See the calendar for dates. The summer location is the Carol Stream Library, Hiawatha Rd, off of Gary Avenue.

The Beginner's SIG meets at the College of DuPage at 10:00am (one hour before the regular meeting). [Chairmen: Tom Bartelt 637-5379 & Dan Hirschfeld 966-7187]

The ST SIG meets around the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. See the calendar for the exact dates. All meetings are at the Roselle Public Library, Park Ave., Roselle, IL. [Chairman: Mike Yocum 469-4490]

The MIDI SIG meets on the third Tuesday of each month at Cos Computers, 3705 N. Southport, Chicago, IL. [Chairman Greg La Brec 425-2085]

The schedule and location of meetings are subject to change so be sure to look in the most recent newsletter for the correct date.

The deadline for submission of material or advertising copy for the newsletter is the 10th of the prior month. All material received after that date will be considered for inclusion in a future issue.

The SCAT Newsletter is a publication of the Suburban Chicago ATarians. Any comments or questions should be addressed to SCAT via P.O. Box 72266, Roselle, IL 60172. Or call any of the following officers:

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Dues for SCAT are $15.00 a year per family. Additional membership cards are available for $1.00 each. To join, just fill out this questionnaire and bring it to the next meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can send it to: SCAT, P.O. Box 72266, Roselle, IL 60172

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